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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

HOUSE FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
MONETARY POLICY AND TRADE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
AND CONSUMER CREDIT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATION

March 19, 2018

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Defense
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Visclosky,

I respectfully request additional funding for the U.S. Army's Operation and Maintenance Account. Specifically, I request that an additional $6,000,000 be added to the UH-60 Modifications, PE Line (6949AA0480) to support acceleration of qualification efforts of the improved H-60 tail rotor drive system, which will result in substantial sustainment savings to the Army over the remaining life of the H-60 Blackhawk fleet.

The H-60 "Blackhawk" is the mainstay of vertical lift for the US Army. It is planned to be in service past 2050. The current tail rotor drive system is heavy and requires frequent maintenance. The current drive system relies on viscos-elastic bearings that have a short time between overhaul (TBO). Maintaining the current drive system requires special alignment and shimming whenever a component is replaced, which increases the maintenance burden on the Soldiers. A redesigned driveshaft system would reduce aircraft weight, reduce recurring maintenance requirements and increase aircraft performance.

The purpose of the tail rotor drive system is to transmit power from the main rotor gearbox, through the intermediate gearbox at the base of the tail, to the tail rotor gearbox located behind the tail rotor, which drives the tail rotor blades. The drive shafts have disk shim packs on each end that allow them to take up the misalignment, compression, and expansion that occurs as the aircraft transitions through various temperature changes and stresses during flight. This design protects the gearboxes from wear and tear due to these dynamic stresses. The current technology driveshafts require periodic teardown and inspection due to the flexible disk packs.

A proposed improved tail rotor drive system design for the UH-60 Blackhawk platform increases performance while reducing weight and sustainment costs and using fewer parts. The drive system is designed to serve as a drop-in replacement for the current Blackhawk driveshafts and couplings. An enhanced tail rotor drive system design would save operating costs for the Army, due to infinite driveshaft life and would require less maintenance than the current system.

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Thank you in advance for considering this request. As the parent of an active duty Marine officer, I maintain a deep appreciation for all that you do to provide for our military. Please do not hesitate to call on me if I can provide any additional information regarding this request.

Sincerely,

Claudia Tenney

Member of Congress